REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to recite a reception arrangement and a connection redirecting arrangement; the reception arrangement is disclosed in paragraphs 0058, 0060 and 0062 of the application as published and the connection redirecting arrangement is disclosed in paragraph 0068 of the published application. The independent claims have been amended so they are directed to the embodiment described in connection with figure 3 and in the spirit of claim 5, as previously submitted, wherein there is no connection between the user terminal and the authentication server, as in step E2 of figure 2. Claim 4 has been canceled to expedite prosecution. Claims 12-17, respectively similar to claims 2, 3, and 5-8, and claims 18-20 have been added to provide applicants with the protection to which they are entitled. Claims 1-8 have been amended to overcome the objection thereof set forth on pages 2 and 3 of the office action.

Applicants traverse the rejection of claims 1 and 11 under 35 USC 101. The recitation of a server in claim 1 and a data processor arrangement in claim 11 causes these claims to be directed to an apparatus. It has been held by the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit that a claim defines a useful machine if it identifies the physical structure of the machine in terms of its hardware, or hardware and software combination. In re Lowry, 32 F.3d 1579, 1583, 32 USPQ2d 1031, 1034-1035 (CAFC 1994); In re Warmerdam, 33 F.3d 1354, 1361, 32 USPQ2d 1754, 1760 (CAFC 1994. The words "server" and "data processor arrangement" satisfy the requirement for a physical structure of a machine to be identified. Despite applicants' belief that claims 1 and 11, as previously submitted comply with 35 USC 101, these claims have been amended to further comply with 35 USC 101. In particular, claim 1 now requires a reception arrangement and a connection redirector arrangement, both of which are physical parts of a machine. Claim 11 is now directed to an authentication server arrangement including physical structures in the form of a receiver arrangement, selector arrangement, authenticator arrangement and connection redirector

arrangement. Claim 10 has been amended so it complies with 35 USC 101.

The double patenting rejection of claims 1-11 is provisional. Because the claims of neither application have been indicated as allowable, applicants withhold responding to the provisional double patenting rejection at the present time.

The rejection of all claims as being obvious as a result of Sawa et al., US Patent Publication 2003/0097953, as modified by Ritola et al., US Patent Publication 2005/0289341, is overcome by the amendments to the independent claims. Sawa discloses a mobile agent 14, i.e., a program, configured by a server 10 for dynamically executing an authentication method of a user terminal to thereby activate a Web application 15 [0050, 0051, Fig. 2]. A request for the Web application 15 from a user terminal is received by Web server 13 included in server 10 to select an authentication method suitable for the user terminal from among a plurality of authentication methods [0053].

Because Web server 13 and Web application 15 are both included in server 10, server 10 includes an arrangement for accessing a service (Web application) dispensed by only one provider and an arrangement for authenticating any user requesting the service. As indicated by page 9 of the office action, with respect to claim 5 "Sawa does not explicitly teach an authentication server wherein the selector arrangement performs tasks...in response to a connection set up between said user terminal and said selecting arrangement (emphasis added)."

Claim 1 requires a provider identifier, and thus a service, to be selected by the user terminal from among plural provider identifiers identifying service servers to start an authentication of the user in only one authentication server, irrespective of the number of the service servers and the selected provider identifier, i.e., the selected service server. Claim 1 indicates there is only one authentication server which is distinct from the service servers, i.e., which is not included in a service server.

This feature has two important advantages.

i) The number of service servers can be very high and the service servers required by the server of claim 1 can be less expensive than the Sawa service servers 10, each of which must include an agent mobile for executing an authentication method

responsive to a service request from a user terminal.

ii) For each service request in claim 1, no connection between the terminal and the service server designated by the selected provider identifier is established (Fig. 3, step 16) before authenticating the user [Fig. 3, F53, 0061; and Fig. 3, F16 after F4; 0067, 0068]. Web server 13 in server 10 of Sawa is always requested independently of the result of the subsequent authentication method and its operation is disturbed by failed authentication methods.

Therefore Sawa fails to disclose a selector arrangement for selecting an authentication identifier in a memory as a function of a selected provider because the Sawa service server 10 is associated with one service provider and is not dedicated only to user authentication in association with plural service servers. More precisely, Sawa fails also to provide the claim 1 requirements of "to authorize said user to access a service dispensed by one of said service servers (distinct from the claimed authentication server) of providers identified respectively by provider identifiers" and "a reception arrangement in an authentication server (and not in a selected service server) for receiving a provider identifier selected in said terminal from said terminal in response to a connection set up between said terminal and said authentication server" (and not in a selected service server).

As shown in Fig. 4 of Ritola (US 2005/0289341), user terminal 4 contacts service provider 6 which sends an authentication request via the user terminal to identity provider 8 selected (1) by the user or (2) automatically by the user terminal to authenticate the user as a function of authentication information sent from the user terminal [0048]. The identity provider is selected at the user terminal by using an IDP application that compares the identifiers of identity providers sent in the authentication request by the service provider to identifiers of identity providers stored in the memory 40 of the terminal [0051].

If the Sawa user terminal transmits the identifier of an identity provider, i.e., the identifier of an authentication method, to the Sawa server 10 as advocated by the office action, the Sawa server still has the two above disadvantages, so one of ordinary skill in the art would see no reason to make the combination the office action suggests. Consequentially, the independent claims are not rendered obvious by the combination of

Sawa and Ritola.

While the assembly of the Ritola identity providers might be similar to an authentication server including authentication methods, as suggested by Sawa server 10, Ritola indicates that the particular service provider 6 selected by the user transmits identifiers of identity providers, i.e., authentication identifiers of authentication methods, to the user terminal to select an identity provider. Transmitting identifiers of identity providers from the particular service provider 6 selected by the user is only possible if a connection between the user terminal and the selected service provider is set up before selecting an identity provider, i.e., an authentication method, and before authenticating the user in the selected identity provider.

Therefore, the combination of Sawa in view of Ritola has the above drawback ii): Web server 13 in Sawa server 10 or the selected service provider 6 in Ritola is always requested independently of the result of the subsequent authentication method and its operation is disturbed by requests from user terminals for which the authentication methods fail. As a result one of ordinary skill in the art would not have combined these two references; there is no point in the combination.

In the claimed authentication server and the claimed method for automatically selecting one of a plurality of authentications, there is no connection between the user terminal and the service server corresponding to the selected provider identifier before authentication of the user, in comparison with operations 62 and 64 of Ritola. The reception arrangement in claim 1 for receiving a provider identifier selected in said terminal from said terminal in response to a connection set up between said terminal and said authentication server is not suggested over Sawa in view of Ritola. This point is emphasized in new dependent claims 18-20.

Based on the foregoing the independent claims are not rendered obvious by Sawa and Ritola. It follows that the dependent claims are unobvious over Sawa and Ritola for at least these reasons.

Allowance of claims 1-11 is in order.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: April 2, 2009
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